

# NEWS RELEASE

**OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS**

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***For Immediate Release***

***May 18, 2006***

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## **FRANCISVILLE WOMAN INDICTED**

Randy G. Massey, Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, announced today that on May 3, 2006, **TONI M. HART**, age 41, of St. Francisville, Illinois, was named in a four count Indictment returned by a Federal Grand Jury sitting in Benton, Illinois.

The indictment alleges that from approximately January 1, 1998, through approximately September 30, 2004, TONI M. HART was the Executive Director of the Lawrence County Housing Authority. Count 1 charges that from January 1, 2002, to December 31, 2002, in Lawrence County, Illinois, HART did embezzle, steal, obtain by fraud and otherwise without authority knowingly convert to her use property valued at \$5,000 or more and owned by or under the care, custody, and control of the Lawrence County Housing Authority.

Count 2 charges that from on or about January 1, 2003, to December 31, 2003, in Lawrence County, Illinois, HART did embezzle, steal, obtain by fraud and otherwise without authority knowingly convert to her use property valued at \$5,000 or more and owned by or under the care, custody, and control of the Lawrence County Housing Authority.

Count 3 charges that on December 8, 2003, in Lawrence County, HART for the purpose of executing and in order to effect a scheme to defraud, did knowingly transmit and cause to be transmitted in interstate commerce, by means of a wire communication, certain signs, signals, and sounds, that is, an electronic payment in the amount of \$1,555.00, from the bank account of the Lawrence County Housing Authority at the First Bank in Lawrenceville, Illinois, to Advanta in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Count 4 charges that on September 27, 2005, in Lawrence County, in a matter within the jurisdiction of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, HART did knowingly and willfully make a material false statement and representation.

With respect to each of Counts 1 and 2, HART faces a penalty of up to 10 years imprisonment, a fine of up to \$250,000, and a term of supervised release of up to 3 years.

With respect to Count 3, HART faces a penalty of up to 20 years imprisonment, a fine of up to \$250,000, and a term of supervised release of up to 4 years.

With respect to Count 4, HART faces a penalty of up to 5 years imprisonment, a fine of up to \$250,000, and a term of supervised release of up to 3 years.

*An indictment is a formal charge against a defendant. Under the law, a defendant is presumed to be innocent of a charge until proved guilty beyond a reasonable doubt to the satisfaction of a jury.*

The investigation in this case was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The case is being handled by Assistant United States Attorney George Norwood.